

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

T H E

bulletin

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January/February 2011

I Think. I Can. – iThink. iCan!



Education Week
March 6-12, 2011



Up Front from the President



Happy New Year! As you look back on the past year, try to remember each experience for the good that has come of it

and the knowledge you have gained even though this is extremely hard to do at times. Remember the love you shared, the happiness you brought, the laughter you enjoyed, the pure joy you experienced, the hard work, and the tears you shed. As you look forward to this new year with new beginnings, may all that you aspire come true.

As I was thinking of writing this *Up Front* I was deciding on my new resolutions for this year. I was debating if I would commit to running a half marathon. I was successful last year in my "Tely 10" partly because I had made that commitment in *The Bulletin*. However, as I was preparing to write, life happened to me again.

I am writing this *Up Front* from the ICU in the Health Sciences Centre. On January 3, while making supper, I received a phone call informing me that my stepdaughter, Heather, was undergoing brain surgery. My mind and body went numb. I had just seen her the day prior and everything seemed as it should.

At the hospital I discovered that they thought she had meningitis and the surgery was to remove the infection that was putting pressure on her brain. The doctors told us that the surgery went well but she was septic and her organs were in danger of failing. She was in isolation in ICU. Once permitted to see her, I was not prepared for what I saw. Twenty-four hours prior she was a vibrant, energetic, pleasant, and silly 27-year-old full of life, but as I looked through the glass all I saw was a small, delicate and very fragile girl in what

appeared to me to be a huge bed. The left side of her head was shaved and bandaged with tubes coming and going. She was on a ventilator and had more intravenous tubes in all her hands than I could count. She was attached to many monitors and I had to keep telling myself that this was Heather and we will get through this ordeal as we have others.

It was ironic that she was undergoing such drastic measures on a Monday night. Last year when Heather, Tyler and myself were all in St. John's together we started family night on Mondays. Everyone was so busy that we decided no one would make plans on Monday evenings and we would all get together at my house for a home cooked meal. I would make their favourite meals, they would visit and we would get caught up on each other's lives. The evening evolved into many other friends of theirs joining for the home cooked meals and everyone looked forward to the evenings with great anticipation. But this fall I became too busy and most Monday nights did not occur because of me. Why did I let other things, including my career, take precedence over my family and friends? What happened to that balance I strive for? How many life changing experiences do I need to endure to make me not become complacent once things are not so raw?

Heather was finally brought out of sedation and the ventilator removed. In the beginning she was struggling with speech, memory, and movement on her right side. Each day brought improvements. Her recovery would be challenging but she would survive. Then another set back. She had to undergo the same surgery again as pressure was building in her brain. The journey begins again. I was devastated by the second surgery as I thought we were on our way to having Heather back again. Her journey will be a challenge and at this moment only time will tell. She has youth

on her side and a family that will support her completely.

Sitting, waiting, and watching all the people in ICU gives you a renewed perspective. I drive by this hospital each and every day but often forget how ill people are and what their families are enduring. Once again I am reminded of the fragility of life and what is truly important. I struggled through Christmas for a variety of reasons and my new year has caused me to face another challenge. I was beginning to feel a little defeated therefore I started a thankful journal. In the morning and in the evening I write three things I am thankful for. Some days I can only manage to be thankful for my feet hitting the floor in the morning. But I need to remind myself of all the things I do have and to be grateful.

As teachers we often get caught up in our careers because it is what defines us, but it is really our families and friends that sustain us. We must find the balance in the two. As teachers it is your dedication, commitment, and passion that ensures that all the students of Newfoundland and Labrador have a first rate education and I commend you for that dedication. Time passes quickly and life changes in a breath. Ensure that you take the time to balance your career and your family.

Hilary B.

bulletin

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Education Week 2011 March 6-12

I Think. I Can. – iThink. iCan!

Education Week has always been about celebrating education and the importance of learning. The classic theme "I Think. I Can. • iThink. iCan!" is broken down into separate sentences for emphasis and combined with the popularity of technological devices such as iPhones and iPads. The words of the philosopher Descartes' famous quote "I think, therefore I am" also comes into play as does the children's book "The Little Engine That Could". The theme will encompass other elements with three sub-themes of:

• Technology • Community • Personal Development

Education Week materials will be mailed to schools in the coming weeks.



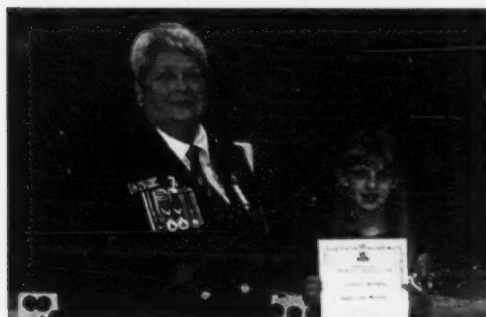
PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

WESTERN BAY

Remembrance Day poster contest winner

Congratulations to Seanna Traverse of Cabot Academy in Western Bay for receiving Honourable Mention at the National Finals (2009-2010) for her Remembrance Day poster. Seanna received this award for her black and white poster at the Primary Level. This contest is coordinated by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 23. Seanna was presented her certificate by Mrs. Leslie Forward of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 23, Carbonear on November 10, 2010 at Cabot Academy's Remembrance Day Assembly. Congratulations Seanna from Cabot Academy!



Seanna Traverse is presented with her certificate by Mrs. Leslie Forward of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 23.

SPANIARD'S BAY

Remembrance Day essay contest winners

As part of our Remembrance Day celebrations, the students of Holy Redeemer School in Spaniard's Bay participate in a poster, poem and essay contest sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 9 in Spaniard's Bay. A winner from each category is selected from each grade level (K-9) and displayed at the

annual Remembrance Day dinner held at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 9. During this dinner, the first and second place essay winners from Grade 9 (centered around the theme of Remembrance) will read their winning essays. The winning entries of the poster (Primary), poem and essay (Elementary and Intermediate) are then sent to Provincial Command of the Royal Canadian Legion to be judged on a Provincial basis. Congratulations to our first place winner, Emily D. Peddle, and to Nicole Kennedy for her second place entry.



Pictured (l-r): Ms. Lisa King, School Principal; Mr. Calvin Crano, Poppy Chairman, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 9; Emily D Peddle - 1st place essay contest; Nicole Kennedy - 2nd Place essay contest; Mr. Dan Churchill - essay sponsor, Mr. App Sheppard, Legion President Branch 9; Mr. Paul Sheppard, Teacher Sponsor.

ST. JOHN'S

Schools partner in Participation Nation initiative

Macpherson Elementary (St. John's), Holy Heart High School (St. John's) and School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador's Participation Nation initiative have partnered to provide leadership and participation opportunities for students at both schools. In the fall of 2010, Holy Heart students were High Five trained to be leaders for the Participation Nation program. Several times a week, various students from Holy Heart plan, coordinate and lead after school activi-

ties such as soccer, Omnikin, Cup Stacking, ringette, and basketball for the grade 4, 5, and 6 students at Macpherson Elementary. Holy Heart students receive valuable leadership training and work experience while Macpherson students get to meet the vision of Participation Nation "to provide an opportunity for every student within the province to experience an active environment without the pressures of winning, but rather the enjoyment of the game itself and the reward that comes from participating." The certificates are all the reward the students need but there are also prize draws and snacks provided for various events. A big thank you goes out to Ms. Trish Boyer of SSNL for her dedication to this program!



Students at Macpherson Elementary participate in Participation Nation.

Are you a Faculty of Education Harlow Alumni?

The Faculty of Education is seeking to identify individuals who completed their teaching internship in Harlow, England.

Please contact:

Ms. Cherie Hussey

chussey@mun.ca

to be included

with our Harlow Alumni



Faculty of Education

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

NLTA 120th Anniversary Celebrations



In November, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association celebrated 120 years of service and dedication to education in this province. As part of the celebrations, every teacher in the province was provided with a 120th Anniversary pin and teachers had the opportunity to take part in an on-line contest for a chance to win gift certificates valued at \$200 each. The winners of the contest were: Rhonda Ivany, St. Peter's Elementary, Mount Pearl; Phyllis Martin, Hillside Elementary, La Scie; Kristie Butt, Holy Cross School Complex, Eastport; Denise Joyce, Holy Cross School Complex, Eastport; and Deanne Barker, Point Leamington Academy, Point Leamington. Congratulations to our winners and thanks to all who participated.

Also in November NLTA's Joint Council met in St. John's and Branch Presidents and Provincial Executive had the opportunity to tour the NLTA building on Kenmount Road. Those who were in attendance had their photo taken with NLTA President Lily B. Cole and Vice-President Jim Dinn while they cut a special cake to mark the occasion of the 120th Anniversary.



Branch Presidents and Provincial Executive join with NLTA President Lily Cole and Vice-President Jim Dinn to cut the cake during NLTA's 120th Anniversary celebrations.

NLTA Scholarship winners 2009-10

Six Newfoundland and Labrador students who completed high school last June have been awarded NLTA scholarships for 2009-10. They are: Nicholas Fleming (Corner Brook Regional High), son of Melva Humber, Corner Brook; Kelvin Kingsley (Corner Brook Regional High), son of Debbie Lindahl, Corner Brook; Samantha Noseworthy (Prince of Wales Collegiate), daughter of Kathy Noseworthy, St. John's; Janie O'Leary (Roncalli Central High School), daughter of Jean Corbett, Holyrood; Alecia Rideout (Exploits Valley High), daughter of Paula Rideout, Grand Falls-Windsor; and Sean White (Gonzaga High School), son of Walter T. White (and Mary Ronayne-White – deceased), St. John's.

The scholarships are awarded annually to dependents of active, retired, disabled or deceased members of the NLTA and are valued at \$1,000 each. Awards are based on the criteria used by the Department of Education for the selection of provincial scholarship recipients.



Nicholas Fleming



Kelvin Kingsley



Janie O'Leary



Samantha Noseworthy



Sean White



Alecia Rideout

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR

Exploits Valley Branch 2009-10 scholarship winner

Alecia Rideout, a graduate of Exploits Valley High, is the recipient of the Exploits Valley Branch Scholarship for the 2009-10 school year. The \$500 cash award goes to the son or daughter of an active NLTA member of the Exploits Valley Branch who possesses the highest overall average during their graduating year. They have to be attending a post-secondary institution full time. Alecia is the daughter of Paula Rideout, (seen in the photo) a grade 2 teacher at Woodland Primary in Grand Falls-Windsor. Money for the scholarship is voluntarily donated by the teachers of the branch.



Alecia Rideout (centre) is presented with her 2009-10 Exploits Valley Branch Scholarship by Rick Duffy, President, Exploits Valley Branch.

GANDER

Gifts of Hope

The staff of Gander Academy was looking for a donor for their holiday fundraising efforts this year and decided on Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope. They were able to raise enough money to train a teacher in the developing world, where more than 70% of teachers are not formally trained. This gift will bring role models to children who will grow up, shape their own lives, teach their own children, and help to change the world. The dollar amount of the gift will be matched by government and organizational donors. Please visit plancanada.ca/greatgifts for further information.

Physical & Health Education Canada Upcoming Nomination Deadlines

Physical Education Teaching Excellence Award (PETE)

The PHE Canada/WINTERGREEN Phys-Ed Physical Education Teaching Excellence (PETE) Award recognizes and promotes excellence in teaching physical education. Nominations are being sought for teachers that provide outstanding teaching performance at the elementary, middle and secondary levels, and who have an exceptional ability to motivate students to participate in a lifetime of physical activity.

www.phecanada.ca/awards/pete-award

Deadline: February 28, 2011

Student Award

The PHE Canada Student Award recognizes outstanding undergraduate student leadership in the field of physical education. Each Canadian university offering a degree in physical education or a related discipline can present the award.

www.phecanada.ca/awards/student-award

Deadline: February 28, 2011

Young Professional Award

The Dr. Andy Anderson Young Professional Award is a yearly award presented to one professional per province that best epitomizes exemplary work on behalf of the physical and health education profession. Selection of the award recipient is made by a PHE Canada representative in each province or territory.

www.phecanada.ca/awards/dr-andy-anderson-young-professional-award

Deadline: Two months prior to your provincial conference

LAURIE W. CHAULK, 1941 - 2010

On September 16, 2010, after a 15-month battle with cancer, Laurie Chaulk passed away at his home in Guelph, Ontario. Laurie graduated from Memorial University of Newfoundland with a B.A.(Ed.) in 1965 and a B.A. in 1969. In 1976, he graduated from the University of Ottawa with a Master of Education degree in Administration. Laurie's first teaching assignment was in Botwood, NL. He spent most of his career as a teacher and principal at both A.G. Hiscock Academy and Humber Elementary in Corner Brook, NL. In the late sixties and early seventies, he served on the Interdenominational Integrated Committee to help improve provincial educational standards and was involved in the development of curriculum for the province. He continued to serve on various provincial and local education committees and encouraged other teachers to be involved in affecting change for the betterment of children.

Laurie not only used his education to further his career, but also to influence the lives of others as he reached out to the community. He served as a member of the board of the Interfaith Seniors Home in Corner Brook and helped to establish quality of life and accommodations for the seniors of his community. He also served as a member of the Association of Christian Salvation Army Laymen (ACSAL) and was involved in meetings and planning of events for all Salvationists across the country. Just months before becoming ill, he attended a Salvation Army symposium in Jackson's Point, Ontario where he represented and had responsibilities for all the Salvationists of South Western Ontario.

Laurie had a love for music and he shared this love with the youth of his church where he not only played in the band himself, but he taught others to play and appreciate music. He became the Y.P. Band leader, taking them to smaller communities within the province and even to the Nation's capital, Ottawa, where they ministered to the people of a large Salvation Army church. He entered the band in several music festivals and achieved awards of excellence.

After being in the education field for 30 years, Laurie retired from teaching and became involved as a staff member of the Gideons International, of which he had been a volunteer member since 1972. As a staff member, he had responsibilities in Atlantic Canada and later across the country from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia. These responsibilities made it necessary for him to relocate to Guelph, Ontario in 2002. As a member

of the Gideons, Laurie spoke at many churches, educational institutions and banquets. He visited schools, prisons and hospitals distributing copies of God's word throughout the world. Upon his retirement from the Gideon staff in 2006, he accepted an invitation to volunteer as a Gideon Regional Field Officer in Ireland and West Africa. His last assignment was to Togo and Benin just five months before he was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Laurie W. Chaulk lived his life for others. Whenever a new idea came to mind, he immediately went to work and involved others to bring that idea to fruition. He loved people and spent his final days being an encouragement to seniors, family members and children who crossed his path. He will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 45 years, Hazel; daughters, Heather Chaulk and Carolyn (Jim) Parsons; his mother, Muriel; his five brothers and three sisters; and many nieces, nephews and cherished friends. *(Submitted by his daughter, Carolyn Parsons)*

KERRY CLARKE

On June 24, 2010 the school community of Tricentia Academy was changed forever with the sudden passing of a dear friend, colleague and teacher, Mr. Kerry Clarke.

Kerry grew up in St. John's and was the oldest of his siblings – Melanie, Brad and Mike. He graduated from Mount Pearl Central High in 1980 and went on to Memorial University.

Upon completion of his Education Degree in 1986, Kerry began a 24-year teaching career with a two-year high school science position in Bonavista. In 1988 he transferred to St. Michael's All-Grade in Arnold's Cove. He taught for 13 years at the former St. Michael's All-Grade School and then nine years at Tricentia Academy. Over the years he was a member of various school board and Departmental Committees and served as Chief Examiner on the Marking Board.

Kerry dedicated his life to the school and his students. He often referred to our school as "heaven". In the classroom he saw potential in all his students, believed in them, and guided them to achieve to the best of their ability. Outside the classroom he would spend countless hours coaching and travelling with teams on the weekends. He was teacher sponsor for SEVEC exchange trips and EF Tours. At school, students will never forget his silly performances at assemblies and of course he always got his pitch in for the Maple Leafs, no matter what the school function.

Kerry had a strong presence in his community of Chance Cove. He was a lay reader, treasurer and

member of the local church board. He was an active member in their Lions Club and over the years held various positions of office. He dedicated countless hours to helping and improving the lives of others.

Family and friends were very important in his life. His wife, Kathleen, and daughters Kayla and Kaitlin were the center. He enjoyed spending time with his parents, siblings and extended family. There were numerous trips around the bay, get togethers and Sunday dinners with family. Kerry loved camping. Like a child on Christmas Eve, May 24th brought a twinkle in his eye. Rain, sleet or snow, Kerry was in Terra Nova surrounded by friends for the start of the camping season.

Another of his passions was woodworking. He would spend many weekends and nights hanging with friends and completing his newest project or odd job that he had committed to do. Kerry was always in his glee when he was making or fixing something.

What we will remember and miss most is his smile and that contagious laugh that left him doubled over and red in the face. He found humour in everything and always reminded us of the importance of a laugh to lighten our day. Kerry lived life to the fullest. He packed more living and fun into his 46 years than most do in an entire lifetime. We are reminded daily of the important life lessons that he has taught us: live in the moment, cherish family and friends, and don't forget the importance of laughter. He will never be forgotten and his legacy continues through the countless number of lives that he so positively impacted.

(Submitted by Doreen Stryde, teacher, Tricentia Academy, Arnold's Cove)



Laurie W. Chaulk



Kerry Clarke



Financing a Year of Deferred Salary Leave

by STEFANIE TUFF

The Deferred Salary Leave Plan (DSLP) is available to any tenured teacher in a permanent position covered by the NLTA Collective Agreement. The terms of reference and other details of the DSLP are set out in Article 51 of the provincial contract (Article 57 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement). Many teachers find the DSLP an excellent means of financing a year of leave to pursue travel, family time, other employment, further studies, or any interest that an individual might have. Leave under the DSLP is fully credited for purposes of pension, seniority, severance pay, salary increments, and sick leave. The plan is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), which does not allow the year of leave to be taken as the last year before retirement. **The deadline to apply for enrolment in the DSLP beginning in September is April 30 of the previous school year.**

While the DSLP provides an excellent opportunity for personal and professional rejuvenation, there are economic realities which must be faced. The Administrative Officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division are often asked what the "difference is" in take-home pay while participating in the DSLP. We cannot provide specific financial details or advice to members because each individual's situation is different and all financial matters, such as salary levels, income tax rates, CPP and EI contribution rates, etc. are subject to change. Accordingly, the information provided herein contains rough estimates only.

The following comparisons of net salary for a teacher on full salary versus the various DSLP options are rough calculations for illustrative purposes only. Each individual teacher's situation will be different. The estimates are based on the salaries that will be in effect as of September 2011. Taxes deducted vary for each teacher and they are approximations only, based on information provided by Teacher Payroll. EI and CPP deductions are based on 2011 formulae. All estimated figures are rounded to the nearest dollar. Teachers participating in the DSLP continue to pay pension premiums based on the full, unreduced

salary. EI premiums are paid on the full salary, but are not paid during the year of leave. Therefore, teachers may not be eligible for EI benefits in the year following the year of deferred salary leave, which may have implications for those wishing to take maternity leave right after a deferred salary leave.

Any further questions on the Deferred Salary Leave Plan should be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599.

Full Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	67,001	77,604	87,792
Estimated Tax	13,190	16,505	19,372
Estimated EI	787	787	787
Estimated CPP	2,218	2,218	2,218
NLTA Fees	838	970	1,097
Pension Deduction	6,265	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	43,703	49,868	56,109

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.

2/3 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	44,667	51,736	58,528
Estimated Tax	5,881	7,647	9,633
Estimated EI	787	787	787
Estimated CPP	2,038	2,218	2,218
NLTA Fees	558	647	732
Pension Deduction	6,265	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	29,138	33,181	36,949

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.

Get Ready... Get Set... Go!

The Collective Bargaining Process Begins

by STEFANIE TUFF

3/4 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	50,251	58,203	65,844
Estimated Tax	7,483	9,851	12,125
Estimated EI	787	787	787
Estimated CPP	2,218	2,218	2,218
NLTA Fees	628	728	823
Pension Deduction	6,865	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	32,870	37,363	41,682

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.

4/5 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	53,601	62,083	70,234
Estimated Tax	8,624	11,174	13,621
Estimated EI	787	787	787
Estimated CPP	2,218	2,218	2,218
NLTA Fees	670	776	878
Pension Deduction	6,265	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	35,037	39,872	44,521

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

As you may recall from the article in the November 2010 issue of *The Bulletin* ("Collective Bargaining – Time to Prepare" by Don Ash), the Collective Bargaining Committee for the next round of provincial contract negotiations will soon be appointed.

The Committee's main responsibility is to develop the opening proposals for negotiations and, in doing so, they will be gathering input from the membership through a number of sources. Given the importance of providing teachers with as many opportunities as possible to participate in the process, a preliminary call for submissions is being made at this time. Teachers should provide their input on the Collective Bargaining Submission Form, copies of which have been mailed directly to all schools in the province. There will be further requests for input as things progress, but this initial information will help the Committee to "hit the ground running" as soon as it is formed. All submissions will be thoroughly reviewed and considered in the development of the opening package. Each and every Association member is encouraged to become actively involved by providing the Committee with input and direction as they focus on the task of developing a comprehensive set of opening proposals that reflect the priorities of teachers.

Submissions can be made electronically via the "Collective Bargaining Submission Form" link on the NLTA website homepage (www.nlta.nl.ca). Paper submissions should be forwarded to the NLTA office by fax or mail as follows:

The Collective Bargaining Committee
3 Kenmount Road
St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll free)

Any questions can be directed to Stefanie Tuff, NLTA Staff Consultant to the Collective Bargaining Committee, at stuff@nlta.nl.ca or 726-3223, ext. 232 or 1-800-563-3599.



Effective January 1, 2012

Update: Changes to the Canada Pension Plan

by PERRY DOWNEY

As a follow-up to the article entitled "Proposed Changes to the Canada Pension Plan" which appeared in the November 2009 edition of *The Bulletin*, additional details are now available from the Federal Government's Department of Finance outlining how the changes that have been approved for implementation will impact the value of one's Canada Pension Plan benefit once they become effective on January 1, 2012. All changes that are slated for implementation will be phased in over a period of five years and are intended to encourage workers to remain in the workforce for a longer period of time.

Adjustments to "Early" (prior to age 65) and "Late" (after age 65) CPP Benefits

Under the current regulations, the normal age at which individuals are entitled to receive 100% of their CPP benefit is age 65. However, individuals can elect to receive a reduced CPP benefit as young as age 60 (referred to as "Early" retirement) or may choose to wait and receive an increased CPP benefit beyond age 65 (referred to as "Late" retirement). The new changes that will be implemented will see a greater reduction in CPP benefits for those choosing the early retirement option and a greater increase for those availing of the late retirement option. The table below outlines the percentage of reduction and increase that will be implemented during the phase in period. Once you elect to receive your CPP and you decide not to return to work in the future, the percentage of increase or decrease is fixed for you and will remain in effect for life.

Age of Election to receive CPP	Current Pension Adjustment	New Pension Adjustments				
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
60	-30%	-31.2%	-32.4%	-33.6%	-34.8%	-36%
65	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
70	30%	31.2%	32.4%	33.6%	34.8%	36%

Note that the "early" CPP benefit reduction will be phased in over a period of five years starting in 2012, to a maximum of 0.6% per month for each month that the pension is taken before age 65. The "late" CPP benefit augmentation will be gradually increased to 0.7% per month for each month that the pension is taken after age 65, up to age 70 and phased in over three years, starting in 2011.

Introduction of Post-Retirement Benefits (PRB)

Currently, once an individual elects to receive his/her CPP benefit, CPP contributions are no longer paid by the employee or the employer even if the individual decides to return to work. However, under the new regulations, anyone under the age of 65 who is in receipt of CPP benefits and decides to continue working or return to work, will be required to pay CPP contributions. Anyone age 65 to age 70 who decides to continue working or returns to work can voluntarily pay CPP contributions. If an employee decides to contribute to CPP, the employer is obligated to make their contributions on behalf of the employee. For those who are in receipt of CPP benefits and continue to work and make contributions to CPP, their CPP benefit will be recalculated at the beginning of each calendar year based on their new contributions and the Post-Retirement Benefits (PRB) are payable for life. For those who make sufficient annual contributions to CPP, the PRB for the CPP could increase as much as 2.5%. The exact amount will depend on the earnings level of the contributor.

Changes to Drop-out Provisions

Currently, anyone who elects to receive their CPP benefit is entitled to a general "drop-out" provision calculation, which allows portions of no earnings or low earnings years to be excluded from the calculation of their retirement benefit. The current drop-out provision percentage is 15% of the years

between age 18 and 60 (42 years) or age 18 and 65 (47 years) or age 18 and at what age the individual elects to receive his/her CPP benefit prior to age 65. For example, if one elects to receive his/her CPP benefit today at age 60, then the drop-out provision would permit 15% of the years or 6.3 years (15% of 42 years) to be excluded from their CPP benefit calculation. Effective January 1, 2012, the drop-out provision will increase to 16%, meaning that someone who elects to receive their CPP benefit will be permitted to have 6.7 years (17% of 42 years) excluded from their calculations. Effective January 1, 2014, the percentage of drop-out will increase to 17%. These drop-out provision percentages are also applicable if one elects to wait until they are 65 years old before electing to receive their CPP benefit, e.g., 7.5 years (16% of 47 years), effective January 1, 2012 and 8 years (17% of 47 years), effective January 1, 2014.

Elimination of the Work Cessation Period

Effective January 1, 2012, contributors can begin receiving their CPP retirement benefits without any work interruption. The requirement to cease work for a specified period of time will be eliminated, thus allowing a contributor to apply for their CPP benefits and remain working. If individuals continue to work and receive CPP benefits, it is mandatory that they continue to make CPP contributions to age 65.

Periodically, all workers throughout Canada should receive a Canada Pension Plan Statement of Contributions from Service Canada outlining their Canada Pension Plan contribution history, as well as their anticipated CPP benefit at age 65. If you have not received a CPP Benefit Statement of Contributions during the past two years, you should contact Service Canada at 1-877-454-4051 and request that a Statement of Contributions be forwarded to you.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Going on Leave? Things You Should Know

Whether you are going on maternity leave, approved leave without pay, unpaid sick leave, educational leave, or deferred salary leave, it is your responsibility to ensure your desired benefits are maintained while on leave. The purpose of this article is to ensure teachers going on leave are aware of the steps which must be taken to maintain these benefits which include NLTA Membership, Group Insurance and Pension service. As well, we are often asked about the impact of such leaves with respect to pension and salary increments. The following table has been prepared to assist teachers in addressing these questions.

Type of Leave	NLTA Membership	Group Insurance	Pension	Salary Increments
Maternity Leave	N1	G1	P1	S1
Approved Unpaid Leave	N1	G2	P1	S2/S3
Approved Unpaid Sick Leave	N1	G2	P1	S3
Paid Educational Leave	N2	G3	P2	S1
Deferred Salary Leave	N2	G3	P3	S1

NLTA MEMBERSHIP

N1: Payment of \$2.00 per month must be made to the NLTA to maintain membership rights and benefits as per NLTA policy. Normally, one cheque covering the entire period of leave is mailed to the NLTA, attention Finance Division, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1.

N2: Membership dues continue to be paid as normal via deduction from paid salary.

GROUP INSURANCE

G1: Teachers must arrange with the plan administrator, Johnson Inc., to pay their share of the group insurance premiums by bank deductions. Failure to do so will result in termination of insurance. If insurance is terminated, the teacher will be required to apply for coverage, and provide proof of medical insurability subject to policy limitations, should the teacher wish to resume coverage. Should a teacher take more than 39 weeks, they must arrange with Johnson Inc. to pay by bank deduction both their share and the government's share of the group insurance premiums for the additional leave period. Otherwise, if insurance is allowed to lapse during a period of parenthood leave, medical proof of insurability may be required in order to be reinstated in the plan.

G2: Teachers must arrange with Johnson Inc. to pay by bank deduction both their share and the government's share (Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, and Health plans only) of the group insurance premiums. Failure to do so will result in termination of insurance. If insurance is terminated, the teacher will be required to apply for coverage, and provide proof of medical insurability subject to policy limitations, should the teacher wish to resume coverage.

G3: Payment of group insurance premiums continue to be paid via normal payroll deduction and government's contribution of their share continues.

PENSION

P1: Pension premium is unpaid and no pension service accrues while on leave. Teachers may arrange with Pensions Division to purchase lost pension service within six months from return to work. If the service time is purchased within this window, the cost is at current contribution rates matched by

government. After six months, the cost is at full actuarial value.

P2: Pension premium is paid on 80% salary, and 80% pension service accrues while on educational leave. Teachers may arrange with Pensions Division to purchase the lost 20% pension service within six months from return to work. If the service time is purchased with this window, the cost is at current contribution rates matched by government. After six months, the cost is at full actuarial value.

P3: Pension premium continues to be paid on the full salary (not the reduced deferred salary), and full pension service accrues.

SALARY INCREMENTS

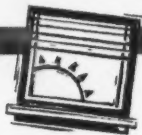
Teachers' placement on the salary grid is reviewed and changes made once per year at the beginning of the school year or at the date of initial employment of a teacher. To determine the number of teaching years for salary increments, all teaching days to the date of calculation are totaled and this total divided by 195, which is the number of days in a school year. A fraction of half a year or more is required to move to the next step on the salary grid.

S1: Credited fully as time taught for the period of leave (maximum 39 continuous weeks for maternity/adoption/parental purposes) for the purpose of salary increment.

S2: Most unpaid leave is not credited for salary incremental purposes; however, it is credited fully as time taught when leave is related to upgrading qualifications or experience.

S3: Not credited for the purpose of salary increment.

Inquiries should be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.



Happy Families ~ Happy Teachers ~ Happy New Year!

by JUDY BERANGER

Teachers often express how much comfort it gives them when their families are thriving. Do you have any New Year's resolutions for family this year? What kinds of fun things do you do as a family? If you were away from home for a period of time, what would you miss most? If you could do one thing to help your family be even stronger, what would it be? Research on family has burgeoned in the last century. In 1905 Leo Tolstoy noted findings on family that consistently demonstrated how happy families resembled one another, while unhappy families were unhappy in their own, unique ways.

There is no yardstick to judge how well a family is doing but members know when they feel part of a trusting, secure environment where people feel safe and valued, where communication is nurtured and difficult situations are addressed in a timely fashion. People feel understood, experience love and in turn feel free to give love. Individuals share responsibility for the family's effective functioning and in so doing develop a strong sense of right and wrong and fairness. Meanwhile, in families with secrets, the unspoken "don't tell" rule, the intolerance and "conditional love" prevent the strength and security experienced by strong families.

How do you define a "family"?

There have been many efforts to define or describe families. Some have tried to capture it by describing its composition, but in the end the true essence of family is its "function" rather than its "form". Family serving organizations have rallied around definitions that are inclusive rather than limiting, recognizing that families come in all shapes and sizes. The definitions identify family as a living unit of individuals regardless of the form it takes. Consistent in the definitions is that a family consists of two or more people, whether living together or apart, related by blood, marriage, adoption or commitment to care for one another. Families have a lifetime hold over us as our lives are shaped both by those who love us and those who refuse to love us.

As a result of decades of research on families, the conviction that only the "traditional or nuclear family" can be functional and healthy no longer stands. Those who succumb to cultural or religious biases that support this distorted, exclusive attitude unwittingly promote the development of judgemental attitudes towards other non-traditional families. Such attitudes can spread like a virus affecting tolerance levels in schools and communities. Take for example families who restructure as a result of separation and divorce. Some refer to the "loss of their family" rather than identify that the "family", in the process of restructuring, are struggling to create new roots for happiness. It is not the structure of the family, but how the individuals within the family system interact with each other, that determines the level of health and well-being. Families are constantly developing and changing and thus the family system is constantly adapting and changing in order to maintain itself. Change affecting one member affects all members. Any change – positive or negative – such as health issues, moving, parenting, relationship issues, disagreements, separation/divorce, job change, adolescence, birth of child, empty nest, and caregiving put pressure upon the family system to adapt and change.

What are the characteristics of strong families?

The Secrets of Strong Families

In their book, *The Secrets of Strong Families*, co-authors Stinnett and DeFrain explore how people in strong families actively care for each other's well-being. They cite six major qualities families share:

1. Commitment – both in good times and stressful times. Strong families are dedicated to investing time and energy to enhance one another's well-being.
2. Appreciation and affection – Members are aware of what actions they take to demonstrate their care for one another, and are not shy to tell people how they feel and how they care. Our buckets of self-esteem are harder to fill than to empty. It is often said that it takes at least ten positives to repair one negative. Being appreciated is like good music – we can

listen to it over and over again.

3. Communication – Family members talk to each other, lots of conversation – funny, difficult, rambling and focused. Family members commit to participating in difficult conversations in a timely fashion and work hard to maintain balance in the conversation by including all voices. It is very important to check out what was heard and what assumptions may be attached.

4. Planned time together – One study of 1,500 school children asked, “What do you think makes a happy family?” Most children replied that a happy family is one that enjoys doing things together.

5. Spiritual well-being – Examples can include altruistic acts, faith in humanity, concern for others, unity with all living things, organized religion and faith in God. Spiritual well-being can be seen as a part of each family member where love, caring and compassion exist. It can be described as the other oriented part of people, the part that assists us in transcending ourselves where we are able to focus on what is sacred and precious to us, the part that is patient and forgiving.

6. Coping ability – Strong families are able to focus on the donut – not the hole. They are able to learn from stress and are conscious about not being crisis-prone. They give energy to what they can do to effectively manage and reduce daily stressors in their lives. Silent treatment and disrespect are not left to fester, and family members are not shy to seek help when life sends major upsets – they shoulder problems and pull together. The focus is on optimal health, prevention, balance and shared responsibility.

Is your home a place where people generally relate warmly to one another? Are you content with the level and quality of interaction that takes place within your home when things are tough, or would you like to improve in this area? If the answer is “no”, consider meeting as a family to explore how this might be improved. Be willing to discuss matters, giving consideration to the views of all involved. Sticking to the point and not injecting irrelevancies or recalling instances not relevant to the discussion at hand are real gifts. Your EAP can provide support if the task seems too onerous.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families

Stephen Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families* applies his well-known seven habits paradigm to assist in keeping families strong. Even though he uses different language his message is very similar.

1. Being proactive rather than reactive;
2. Beginning with the end in mind – having goals and a family mission statement;
3. Putting first things first – planning family times that have teaching moments, fun times, problem

solving opportunities;

4. Thinking win-win – cultivating a family culture of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation;

5. Seeking first to understand and then to be understood – moving toward empathic listening;

6. Focusing on synergy – grows out of mutual respect and understanding;

7. Sharpening the saw – cultivating and creating opportunities to support present traditions and grow new ones that promote a sense of belonging and nurturing.

Traits of a Healthy Family

Family author and researcher, Dolores Curran in her book *Traits of a Healthy Family* espouses similar traits: healthy families communicate and listen, affirm and support one another, teach respect for each other, develop a sense of trust, have a sense of play and humor, exhibit a sense of shared responsibility, teach a sense of right and wrong, have a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound, have a balance of power among members, have a shared spiritual core, respect the privacy of one another, value service to others, foster family time and conversation, share leisure time, and admit to and seek help with problems.

Family can be a plus for all of us no matter what form it takes – the main ingredients for success are the love and caring and a sense of belonging for other human beings in the family. The New Year is a great time to reflect on the importance of giving of ourselves in all human relationships. It is a time to commit to new goals that enhance quality of life and well-being for us – both as teachers and as members of a family. Teachers are directly affected by family health. Call your EAP for more information about an inventory tool that can help you in this journey.

Happy Families – Happy Teachers – Happy New Year!

A family is a place where minds come in contact with one another. If these minds love one another the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden. But if these minds get out of harmony with one another it is like a storm that plays havoc with the garden. ~ Buddha (B.C. 568-488).

Judy Beranger is a wellness and employee assistance coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Judy Beranger (ext. 265) or Claudette Coombs (ext. 242). Suggestions for future articles for this section are welcomed.



Professional Development Grants Facts and Falsehoods

by BEVERLEY PARK

Picture this – two NLTA members meet at a conference in Halifax. One comments to the other that she must remember to keep her taxi receipts to submit later and collect her PD Grant. She had been approved for the NLTA PD Fund for Out-of-Province Travel and would receive \$500.00 upon her return, once she submitted a brief conference report and applicable receipts.

The second teacher, attending the same event, has not applied in advance; in fact, she did not know the PD Fund even existed. Hearing about this now, she falsely assumes she can apply after the fact. Therein lies the problem! In fact, she cannot apply after the fact, and if she does, she'll be declined on the basis of ineligibility.

This scenario has played out all too often, and this article is an attempt to inform teachers of this fund and the policies governing access to it.

Here are the facts:

- Teachers are eligible to receive the PD Fund for Out-of-Province Travel once every five years.
- The maximum amount awarded is \$500.00; the actual amount is based on the budget submitted in the application.
- The fund can offset costs of REGISTRATION and/or TRAVEL only (although all expenses must be included in the overall budget submission).
- Teachers must apply IN ADVANCE of the PD event they are planning to attend.
- There are TEN application deadlines – the third Thursday of each month that school is open: September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May and June.
- There is NO RETROACTIVE funding. If you miss the application deadline prior to your event, you become ineligible to receive the grant. (This was the case in the above scenario.)
- There is an application form ... accessible by calling the PD Division or online at www.nlta.nl.ca (follow the links to ONLINE FORMS – PD Fund – Out-of-Province Grant Application).

The Professional Issues Committee, which oversees the policies governing the fund, reviewed the policies and practices of this fund as recently as November 2010.

The fund is administered by the Professional Development Division. If you have any questions/or to access the fund, please contact:

1-800-563-3599/726-3223

Beverley Park, bpark@nlta.nl.ca, ext. 244

George Tucker, gtucker@nlta.nl.ca, ext. 245

Susan Cardoulis, scardoulis@nlta.nl.ca, ext. 246

YOU CAN	YOU CANNOT
You can get up to \$500.00 to attend an out-of-province PD event if you have not received it within the last five years – have applied and met the deadlines in advance and been notified of the award. Money is paid out once you return and submit your receipts and a brief report.	You cannot receive the award if you have missed the deadline in advance of the event or if you have received the award within the last five years.

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Theraplay

by JOAN MACINTOSH

Inclusion of children with development disabilities in the school system is a topic that is currently receiving considerable attention. In my experience, concern about the rights of individuals with disabilities to receive educational services in an inclusive environment is not new. It is a challenge that has existed for decades. Over years of initiatives in school systems in Atlantic Canada, the old question, "Who are schools for?" continues to be powerful. If a sincere commitment exists to equally provide for all students regardless of academic ability, there is a responsibility to provide service that demonstrates quality, insight and awareness that extends beyond words on paper. My interest in meeting the needs of students with challenges has led me in a direction of professional development that provides the capacity to help children learn self regulation, social skills, attachment and self-esteem. These skills, essential to engagement in academic learning, have taken place through the vehicle of Theraplay, a directive and attachment based form of play therapy.

Theraplay was developed as a mental health initiative in conjunction with the Head Start Program in Chicago in the 1960s. Children from impoverished backgrounds entered educational programs lacking the capacity to learn academic skills because of attention issues, trauma, developmental disabilities, mental health concerns and an inability to form attachments. Children were assessed in terms of their need for the four Theraplay dimensions of engagement, nurturance, challenge and structure. A plan was developed with specific treatment goals. Play activities that facilitated the acquisition of skills were identified and implemented and the session videotaped and reviewed. Over the years the practice was expanded to include parents and caregivers. Currently, Theraplay is carried out, studied and refined around the world in a variety of settings by practitioners with diverse professional backgrounds. Theraplay research indicates that the practice results in improvements to regulatory and attachment behavior.

With permission of the Eastern School Board for a research project, I used Theraplay principles in my capacity as primary and elementary Special Education teacher working with students with a

variety of significant challenges. Over three years I observed that regular, well-planned, and supervised practice furthered my ability to meet the children's needs. I noted decreases in anxiety, reduced controlling behavior, increased capacity for sustained attention, greater compliance, decreased aggression, enhanced social skills, and, in general, a demonstrable improvement in a sense of well-being in participating children. Theraplay was practiced individually and in small groups with children diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Trauma, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, Learning Disabilities, Brain Injury, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and young children without exceptionalities. These children ranged in age from five to twelve.

Theraplay practice is effective because skills are practiced and integrated through warm, engaging, directive and structured play activity. That makes it possible to connect with children in natural ways that are attuned to developmental needs. The videotaping of sessions, with appropriate parental consent, allows reflection on practice, self-correction and fine-tuning. Theraplay certification requires the completion of courses, many hours of practice and comprehensive supervision by a certified supervisor. It is readily adaptable to implementation in the regular classroom, meets the needs of diversified groups and can be combined with other play therapy approaches, active living games, physical education, team-building, arts and crafts, story time and other activities. As well, Theraplay can be used to significantly empower parents and caregivers with parenting and leadership skills that enhance attachment and increase the ability of adults to deal effectively with children in their care.

Inclusion of children who do not conform to the traditional framework and values of the school environment can offer significant challenges. There are increasing numbers of children, however, who will not adapt to expectations of systems without flexibility, insight and modification. The ability of schools to include children depends on a capacity for intelligent responses that address developmental and mental health issues beyond academic performance. This requires professional skill development and insight. If the question "who are schools for?" is answered with, "all children" then investment in long-term and high quality professional development will reflect that commitment.

Joan MacIntosh is currently on leave from her position as a Special Education/Pervasive Needs Teacher at Macpherson Elementary School in St. John's.





Take Your Professional Learning Professionally!

by JIM MURPHY

More and more, in a world where information, programs and services are a click away, educators must take ownership of their professional learning; be masters of their learning destiny, as it were. Over the years, there has been a shift towards this type of thinking, as school districts provide employees with opportunities to develop professional learning plans that are meant to dovetail with district and provincial goals and lead ultimately to continued gains in student learning. But, it is still incumbent on the educator to take responsibility for the personal learning goals established through the planning process. Accordingly, the employer may offer opportunities for educators to participate in many types of professional learning, but cannot possibly recognize and respond to the individual needs of every single educator. Therefore, to truly respond to your personal professional learning needs, you must accept the responsibility and actively seek out your own opportunities.

In the "pre-web" era, there were limitations to the resources that could be accessed. Mostly, they came in the form of direct in-service from the employer or perhaps some reading material from a journal or book in the staff room. What you received (and certainly, what you retained), in a face-to-face session was likely limited. Sessions were of short duration and there were few opportunities for follow-up. Otherwise, if you were upgrading your education, it meant applying for leave or taking the time in the summer to participate in a program at a brick and mortar institution.

But professional learning opportunities in this digital era far surpass and are significantly more diverse than anything that could have been imagined even ten years ago. Through the potential of the Web, a myriad of resources and services are available any time, just in time. Now some of the questions to ask are:

- When can I access these professional learning activities that are not employer generated?
- How can I measure the validity of the sessions as legitimate learning activities?

- How can I negotiate professional learning time to avail of these important learning opportunities during the instructional day?

Let's say that through Classroom 2.0, a web portal for educators, a webinar on differentiated instruction will take place from one until two on Thursday afternoon. You would like to attend but only require a substitute for one hour on that day. How can you arrange this? You believe that creative administrators who practice instructional leadership will help make this happen for you. Perhaps another teacher on staff needs a substitute for another learning event from two until three that day? Or, maybe the substitute covers your second period as well so that you can more fully integrate some of your new learnings into a lesson plan for the next day? Maybe you participate in a reflective discussion around the same topic by participating in a forum and reading through ideas and experiences from others who have already implemented similar strategies. The point here is that the system supports around professional learning have not evolved at quite the same pace as the availability of opportunities through various technologies. But I encourage you to bring these web-based professional learning opportunities to the attention of your administration. He or she may be able to facilitate the process for you and together you may devise some creative means for attending timely sessions during the instructional day from the comfort of your classroom or a designated e-learning room in the facility. If you are still a little unsure of how to locate quality professional learning sessions online, then discuss it at a staff meeting. I am certain that someone on staff is probably availing of online learning opportunities such as a webinar.

So, what exactly is a webinar, and how can I connect to one?

Webinars are web-based sessions that can vary from passive "sit, listen and get", to highly interactive and engaging sessions in which you as participant become actively involved. The more skilled the pre-

sender/moderator and the more comfortable you are with the tools, the greater the likelihood the delivery of the session will be interactive. But one thing's for sure, webinars are a great way to enhance professional learning opportunities. Through them, you can access subject matter experts, researchers, authors, historians or other educators with similar goals and interests who are more than willing to share knowledge and experiences. Many I have attended will offer documentation "on the fly", live access to web links, and in Elluminate, one of the more common web conferencing tools, participants can save the presentations for future reference, interact with peers and the moderator through chat and voice and can access recorded sessions as a follow-up to the live session.

I recently attended three webinars: one with a researcher/author, another with a university professor and a third with a non-profit agency. All three were equally informative and engaging and I was able to receive timely information directly from the presenters, most of whom I would never have been able to access otherwise. In one instance, I was able to ask questions of the author of a recently printed resource, a recognized guru in the world of 21st century skills and learning. I was also able to interact with others in the session and this too was very powerful as we shared knowledge and experiences.

In terms of the validity of any webinars, professional judgement and critical literacies are a must. Be aware of companies that are pushing products or individuals that are selling services as opposed to those who may provide sessions/strategies that are research-based and who are recognized for their contributions to educational networks. There are snake oil sales people everywhere and it is no different on the Web. Take the time to research a session and the presenter before you attend or, at the very least, ensure that you are accessing a session through a valid source such as Classroom 2.0 or Edublog, and even then do your homework. It is your valuable time, so be sure that what you are receiving is valid, accurate and transferable to your teaching.

To summarize, then, webinars are a powerful means of connecting with authentic, timely professional learning opportunities in a "just what I needed, just in time" format. They are of short duration and can be accessed from your school or home on an Internet connection with little more than a computer and multimedia speakers. But, remember to start with your professional learning goals in mind before you start searching for sessions to attend. Further, as you set out to accomplish these goals, keep in mind that although the employer may be able to help you achieve some of your professional learning plan, you

need to take primary responsibility follow through with your learning goals.

Here, according to <http://edublogawards.com>, are some of the more popular access points for webinars. If you know of others, please feel free to pass them along to our readers at www.myvtc.ca where you can access this article in a blog format.

- Classroom 2.0 Live
- Connected Principals
- Discovery Education Network
- EdTechLive
- Edublogs Live
- K12 Online Conference
- Math 2.0
- ATN Online
- Future of Education
- Global Education Conference 2010

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.



MyVTC to Roll Out New Interface...

On the week of February 14-19, the Virtual Teacher Centre of the NLTA will be upgrading to a newer version of its community software.

We are excited to be able to expand and improve the services and the tools available to our valued users.

Although we are doing our best to maintain the look and feel of the current web interface, users will experience some minor differences in the new structure and navigation.

If you experience any difficulties with the new interface, please feel free to contact the Virtual Teacher Centre.

We thank you for your continued support. :)

**Jim Murphy, Coordinator, Virtual Teacher Centre, jmurphy@nlta.nl.ca
Brian Pittman, Programmer, Virtual Teacher Centre, bpittman@nlta.nl.ca**



2B or not 2B?

OMG! You've Got 2B Kidding!

by BEVERLEY PARK

I suspect Willy Shakespeare would be turning in his grave to see that title ... or would he? Perhaps, as a man who was a master of language and who loved to manipulate words, he would have an appreciation for the creativity of youth who can now communicate with an efficiency as never before seen. The only thing I can think to compare it to would be the primitive cave drawings or hieroglyphics which could depict whole tales in a series of simple images.

I am a lover of language and whether it is in my reading of a good book or indulging my addiction to CBC Radio and hearing Gian or Rex, I take great pleasure in a well-turned phrase. In this age of instant messaging, texting and tweeting, the well-turned phrase may be a dying art. Can one actually afford those extra words when the message is limited to 140 characters? There is a hue and cry of the loss of standards. (My God, they can't write a sentence!) I remember the same being said about me and my classmates when in high school we piloted a new English Language curriculum and we were given much less structured writing assignments. Similarly, students today are criticized when they use the shortcuts of symbols to write text messages. While teachers may decry this trend to brevity and a new set of symbols to communicate, like it or not, I don't think we can ignore it. Here's my take on it.

I believe that in dealing with our students we must be particularly mindful of – and respectful of – youth culture. If we dig our heads in the sand and ignore that which is all around them (and us), trends will continue to evolve and we will have less and less common ground upon which to build the student-teacher relationships that are critical to our success as teachers and our students' success as learners. That is not to say that we condone everything that is done in the name of popular culture, but some things, like the ways people connect and communicate are pretty basic. I am not suggesting for a minute that you all start sending text messages to your students ... absolutely not! What I am suggesting is that use it or not, we need to understand this emergent language.

As a rule, I only text sparingly. Still preferring the sound of someone's voice, I more often use that device known as the telephone! For one thing, I inherited my father's hands, and there isn't a Blackberry made that can accommodate my thumbs. But as a teacher, I would make it my business to understand the language of the users of the new media. As a teacher, I regularly intercepted notes (heck, as a student, I even wrote a few!). I remember the junior high student's quickly scribbled "I ♥ U" (obviously hoping for a "I ♥ U 2" reply). Efficient though it was, I cannot imagine that replacing a well-written love letter! But gone are the days when a "note" was a scrap of paper folded into a small package and winged across the classroom. Gone too are the days when a tweet was the sound of a bird song! These days they're more likely to be a beep on a cell phone. LOL!

I actually think it smart that users have devised an efficient and time-saving code which fits their communication needs and the media they use. The issue is not that the language I so appreciate is good and chat lingo is bad; they simply must co-exist the way other languages co-exist. Try this experiment. Turn on a tape recorder and tape an ISSP meeting. In a half hour you will hear more edu-speak (i.e. jargon for the work we do) than you ever imagined. We teachers have our own language. And if you don't think that's true, ask someone who is not a teacher to listen in and try and interpret what we say. They'll be quick to point out that we use words and phrases that are not commonly understood by those not in the club. Now consider parents who are non-educators. They don't have the luxury of throwing up their hands and saying that they cannot understand teacher talk. No, the fact is they actually learn our language out of necessity – the need to understand things that are important to them – CRTs and outcomes and rubrics. The same idea applies to our learning the language of our students.

Content and context are the big determinants of the appropriateness of language. While most English literature teachers would not accept "2B or not 2B"

as a quoting of the famous soliloquy, it should be acceptable that a student (or a teacher) would write BBFN in a text to his or her BF. It's all about knowing what applies when – for us and our students. Just as they sometimes have to play by our rules, we also have to be able to relate to them on their terms. As a teacher of junior high, I recall making a conscious effort to watch some of the TV shows that my students watched. I admit that there were times it seemed like a waste of precious time until I realized that it was an investment. I saved on classroom management by the relationship building that happened when I was able to enter into conversation with them about things of interest to *them*.

Recently, I heard of a teacher who had her students try to translate some key literary passages into the language of texting. That led to the whole comparative discussion of language. She commented on how much she had learned, but the big bonus was seeing her students delve deep into the literature to understand the message and, as is the practice, cut to the chase – with the fewest possible characters.

As is the custom this time of year, people make resolutions. While it may be a bit late, why not make a belated resolution to learn a new language. Below is a little pre-test to get you started (and maybe surprise your students!). Enjoy! They'll thank u 4 it!

See how many of these you can translate from chat lingo to plain and simple English. The first five to email the correct responses (bpark@nlta.nl.ca) will win a prize!

1. lol
2. yat or uat
3. btw
4. otg
5. ttc
6. brb
7. sup?

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.



A Writer Among Us

by GEORGE TUCKER



Michele Doucette

Photo courtesy of Christopher Vaughan/The Georgian Newspaper (Stephenville)

With the universe acting in a rather serendipitous fashion, I had the pleasure of meeting Michele Doucette while attending the two-day Western School District PD Close-Out in Corner Brook (October 2010). Michele was one of some 35 participants who took in a workshop that I gave entitled, *Motivating Students to Learn*. At the conclusion of the three-hour session, Michele and I spoke briefly re the content of the workshop. She stated that she had enjoyed the presentation and the positive messages that I attempted to convey. Through that conversation and a follow-up email, I discovered that Michele, a long-term special education teacher (i.e., Instructional Resource Teacher) from the west coast of the province was also a very accomplished and successful author. Given the uniqueness of Michele's dual career and the indisputable evidence of her success, I felt a need to tell the story of "The Writer Among Us".

Michele Doucette, a resident of Stephenville, has been teaching in the field of Special Education since 1985. While at least twenty years of her career have been dedicated to Pervasive Needs (Pathway 5) students, she has also worked with severe Learning Disabled as well as high-functioning Autistic students, many of whom have gone on to become their own accomplishment. As challenging as the school days often are, she has always enjoyed working with the neediest students throughout the Western School District. Even though her schedule as a teacher is busy and oftentimes hectic, Michele has still made time to pursue her passion for writing.

As an avid reader and researcher, writing is a skill that has always come naturally to Michele. "As long as I can remember, I was reading and writing. I can even remember winning spelling contests in Grade 1. I just had such a love for the written word that I always knew I would someday become a published writer. I would have to say that I probably began writing in earnest when I was in Junior High", quoted Michele.

After graduating from Mount Saint Vincent University with a Masters of Education in Literacy (July 2006), Michele was ready to begin challenging herself, wanting to position her writing out in the public eye. It was her Acadian ancestry that became the inspiration for *A Travel in Time to Grand Pré*, her

first novel. Previous to its publication in July 2009, she was steadily involved in editing projects for other published authors (Shawn Sinclair, Suzanne Olsson, and Stanley J. St. Clair). An updated and expanded edition was released in March 2010. Described in such terms as compelling, fascinating, powerful, gripping, most unexpected, esoteric, innovative, imaginative, profound, inspirational, nostalgic, poignant, expertly woven and full of intrigue, *A Travel in Time to Grand Pré* is a historically informative adventure, combining time travel with both the proclaimed holy bloodline as well as Acadian history.

Grand Pré has long been held as a place a fascination by many, given the deportation of the French Acadian people made popular by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his epic poem *Evangeline*. What made Grand Pré even more special for this author was the fact that her maternal grandparents honeymooned there. Her favorite vision of the park has always been that of the ancient willow trees surrounding the pond, the very image displayed on the cover of the book, thanks to Shaun George of New Minas, Nova Scotia.

When asked if the main character of the book, Madeleine Sinclair, has the same characteristics as herself, Michele was quick to reply, "While we have many shared interests and beliefs, which certainly show up throughout the text, I'd like to think that she is more of an adventurer than I – after all, she does get catapulted back to 1754 Acadie."

On November 12, 2010, Michele was involved in an online Facebook discussion surrounding *A Travel in Time to Grand Pré*. Glenda A. Bixler, a retired independent book reviewer was the moderator of the event (Reviewers Roundup). In addition, Michele was also highlighted as the November Spotlight Author on Glenda's blog located at <http://gabixlerreviews-bookreadersheaven.blogspot.com/>

With an interest in history, genealogy, spirituality (metaphysics) and alternative healing modalities (crystals, stones, Reiki), Michele continues to write on these very topics. To date, she has published five additional books: *The Ultimate Enlightenment For 2012: All We Need Is Ourselves* (April 23, 2010), a title that has been nominated for the Allbooks Review Editors Choice Award (2011) for best Inspirational

title; *Turn Off The TV: Turn On Your Mind* (June 30, 2010); *Veracity At Its Best* (August 5, 2010); *The Collective: Essays on Reality* (August 12, 2010); and *The Wisdom of Crystals* (August 20, 2010).

"Writing is as natural a form of expression to me as is breathing; this is about the best comparison that I can make. Writing is something that I am passionate about," opines Michele. In the equation often toted by me during my workshops of Student Motivation or the 7-Habits sessions that I facilitate, passion + skill = voice. Writing, then, allows Michele to share her voice with others.

When asked what tips she could share for inspiring writers, Michele was quick to offer the following advice. "If writing is your passion, you must write. The more you write, the better you get to be at writing. Keep writing so that you, too, may find your voice and be able to share it with others." She was quick to add, "Do not kid yourself, writing is demanding work." As she noted, there are countless manuscript attempts, re-reads and edits to be made. Covers need to be designed. Permission must be received from photographers to avail of their images. Likewise for any images featured throughout the text itself. You also need to decide as to whether or not to go the traditional publishing route (publishing companies) or the self publishing POD (Print on Demand) route. Of course, then comes the hours invested by authors of doing their best to secure notable PR for their book, be it in the form of author promotional packages (where the books are reviewed by official book reviewers, or Michele's favorite being through Allbooks Reviews International located at www.allbooksreviewint.com/), online reviews posted by readers, newspaper interviews, magazine articles, online ezines, local retail stores, online discussions, blogs, radio shows, podcasts, etc.

Michele is currently working on four manuscripts with plans to publish all four books in 2011. The titles include: *Sleepers Awaken: The Time Is Now To Consciously Create Your Own Reality*; *Healing the Planet and Ourselves: How To Raise Your Vibration*; *Germain Doucet (Sieur de LaVerdure): Ancestry of Michele Doucette*; and *Back Home With Evangeline*, the awaited sequel to *A Travel in Time to Grand Pré*.

Does Michele see herself continuing in the field as a writer? "Most definitely", she emphatically states. And as if to clarify her position, she adds, "As the saying goes; once a writer, always a writer."

For further information you can contact Michele directly at michele.doucette@nf.sympatico.ca

George Tucker is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.



Media Literacy

The Key to Offsetting Media Influences on Body Image and Self-Esteem

by MARY-LOU DONNELLY

As a mother of three daughters, and as teacher and school principal for 25 years, I have witnessed the influences that media have on young people.

Let's face it. Media are here to stay as steadfast influences in the lives of our youth. The media are cool and what young people see and hear in the media helps them figure out how the world works, and who and what is valued as important in our society. And often times, the message is about body image, especially among girls but also among a growing number of boys.

Gender issues and media influences are not new topics for the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Our landmark 2003 *Kids' Take on Media* study, involved 6,000 students who provided us with a snapshot of their daily and weekly media intake. This ground-breaking survey confirmed that we all live and thrive in a media-rich environment where screens and media are a part of our kids' daily lives.

CTF has also examined the realities, concerns, expectations and barriers experienced by adolescent women in Canada.

Nearly 1,000 young girls and women between the ages of 11 and 19 gave us their views on politics, the environment, global issues, love and sexuality, drugs and alcohol, and their views on their personal body image, confidence and self-esteem. The study involved 200 teachers who led the discussion groups with teenagers in every province and territory – here are some of the findings:

- 85% of the girls strongly agreed or agreed that they worry a lot about how they look.
- Body-loathing was evident in the volunteered comments of many girls, and losing weight, a general preoccupation;
- 48.2% strongly agreed or agreed that "Being popular is a big worry for me right now".

The study highlighted the fact that young women face many new challenges and choices and that many

of their concerns are the same as those of previous generations: popularity, personal appearance, school events, relationships and the future.

Although CTF's *A Cappella* study was released in 1990, the findings are still relevant today.

The study was conducted prior to the heightened sophistication of advertising, to the mainstream use of the Web, to the word Google in our everyday vocabulary, to the proliferation of social media networks, video games and music videos.

Women have made some progress with respect to economic and human rights issues in the last 20 years. Collectively, we have addressed the issue of media's influences on young people through education and media literacy programs. However, despite all our best efforts, self esteem and body image continue to rank high on the list of concerns among young girls and women.

For example, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media released in 2010 findings of a study on this issue. The Institute is a non-profit organization that works with entertainment creators and companies, educates the next generation of content-creators, and informs the public about the need to increase the number of girls and women in media aimed at kids and to reduce stereotyping of both males and females.

The study concluded that little seems to have changed in 20 years as far as gender representation in the mainstream media – which likely explains why body image remains an issue:

- 71% of roles on television and popular films were male and 29% were female.
- The study shows that women continue to be portrayed in stereotypical roles in family movies and it's affecting children's attitudes and potential advancement in their lives.

The 2010 study concludes by saying that: *A steady diet of these types of depictions may send the message that girls are less valuable and capable than boys... even worse, heavy exposure to these skewed patterns may*

become so normal to audiences that they do not see the need for gender parity in the media or industry change.

In general, extremely rigid and uniform standards of beauty are embedded in TV, billboards, magazines and online which makes us see 'beautiful people' all the time, more often than members of our own family, making exceptional good looks seem real, normal and attainable.

This has been happening for years, since the beginning of advertising. However, the unrealistic and regressive portrayal of women goes back even further.

Well-known author and feminist Naomi Wolf gave a glimpse of the historical path of this unreal portrayal in her book *"The Beauty Myth": A century ago, normal female activity, especially the kind that would lead women into power, was classified as ugly and sick. If a woman read too much, her uterus would 'atrophy.' If she kept on reading, her reproductive system would collapse and, according to the medical commentary of the day, 'we should have before us a repulsive and useless hybrid'...* Participation in modernity, education and employment was portrayed as making Victorian women ill...Victorians protested women's higher education by fervidly imagining the damage it would do to their reproductive organs...and it was taken for granted that 'the education of women would sterilize them' and make them sexually unattractive: 'When a woman displays scientific interest, then there is something out of order in her sexuality.'

Although women have come a long way with respect to education, career opportunities and economic achievements, one thing remains the same: a persistent and unwarranted fixation with women's sexuality and our reproductive organs.

For decades, women have been portrayed as sex objects in the overabundance of advertising and media images that drive home the message that exposed bodies and looks are what count.

The sexualized images of women in music videos and video games are especially damaging where those women have been reduced to simply an object for another's sexual use. In video games, if the female role isn't the sexy image, she's the clever librarian, the healer girlfriend, the heavily accented sexy villain.

The women in the 'girls gone wild' videos think they are expressing their female strength by exposing their breasts for the screaming male audience and the well paid videographer. Young teens are allowing themselves to be filmed while performing sex acts and then posting the videos on the Internet.

As a result, young women today are being bombarded with mixed messages and many are unfortunately embracing the role of sex object. (cont'd)

And boys and young men are not immune to this influence.

New figures show that the market amongst young men for plastic surgery is bigger than ever; it has doubled in the last five years. In the United States, sales of men's hair dyes have risen from 18 million to over 100 million in the same period.

Research is showing that while body image concern in women would be associated with eating disorders, men's exercise addiction is a concern, as is the use of anabolic steroids.

For its part, the fashion industry continues to exert a powerful influence on girls and the way they view themselves and their bodies.

A study released in February 2010 by the Girls Scouts of America found that 9 in 10 American teenage girls say the fashion industry is at least partially responsible for girls' obsession with being skinny.

The nationwide survey, which included more than 1,000 girls ages 13 to 17, found that many girls consider the body image sold by the fashion industry as unrealistic, creating an unattainable model of beauty. However, despite the criticism of this industry, three out of four girls say that fashion is "really important" to them.

The health implications of the preoccupation with super thinness are serious. Nearly one in three girls said they have starved themselves or refused to eat in an effort to lose weight.

Closer to home, the Canadian Women's Health Network estimates that almost 90% of Canadian women and girls are equally unhappy with the way they look which often leads to serious health problems such as: unhealthy dieting, taking drugs or smoking to lose weight, depression and other mental illnesses, disordered eating and unnecessary surgery such as breast implants, collagen injections and liposuction.

With respect to Social Media Networks, researchers are now beginning to see the links between the use of Facebook and psychological issues. According to a York University study released in September, people with lower self-esteem or narcissism spent more time on Facebook. The study examined the online habits and personalities of 100 Facebook users at York University ranging in age from 18-25 years old.

Published in the journal *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, the study found that individuals higher in narcissism and lower in self-esteem spent more time on the site and filled their pages with more self-promotional content. Those with lower self-esteem were more apt to use this social networking tool.

The study asks whether these status lines and updates are accurate representations of the individual

or are they merely a projection of who the individual wants to be? Those findings have yet to be uncovered. But it all boils down to how young people see themselves.

In the movie "The Social Network", once again, women's sexuality is at the foreground. Facebook began as a website where people could compare and vote on the "hotness" of Harvard women. We all know the rest of the story of Facebook which now has 500 million users.

So here's the question. Can we as teachers, parents and citizens create a cultural shift in how gender is portrayed in the media we use, enjoy, absorb and create?

I believe we can. In three words: Media and digital literacy.

Ernest Boyer, former U.S. Commissioner of Education once said: *It is no longer enough simply to read and write. Students must also become literate in the understanding of visual images. Our children must learn how to spot a stereotype, isolate a social cliché, and distinguish facts from propaganda, analysis from banter, and important news from coverage.*

Teachers see first-hand how the media impacts on their students. In my experience as a teacher, I've seen my students engage in teachable moments by way of impromptu classroom discussions about a media report, world event or a popular movie. These days, kids are talking about the latest trends on Twitter or the latest cool YouTube videos posted on their walls on Facebook.

More and more teachers are integrating media and digital literacy into their classrooms to equip their students with the necessary critical thinking skills for positive and enriching media experiences.

I am constantly impressed by reports of teachers already using cell phones, iPods, and Web 2 tools as ways to engage their students in group discussions, media productions, digital art projects and community group projects.

And the learning is a two-way street as students themselves teach teachers the technical applications and teachers teach students how to apply the knowledge and content learned at school within these apps.

There are a number of wonderful professional development workshops and opportunities for teachers to keep up with the rapid changes, and the newest teaching and learning strategies.

Some of these resources are readily available and allow me to praise the rich and diverse educational resources available on the Media Awareness Network's website. In particular, I encourage you to visit MNet's "Beauty and body image in the media" section of its Web site.

Another wonderful resource was developed by

one of our Member organization – the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Reflections of Me: Body Image and Self-Esteem is a preventative educational program that teaches critical thinking and helps children engage in healthy and productive choices in their lives.

It includes a set of lesson plans for students from Kindergarten to Grade 8 that reinforce healthy attitudes, acceptance and resiliency in young students. The resource is integrated into the regular program and teaches students to accept diverse bodies, to promote body acceptance, resistance to harassment associated with body image and to question social adherence to body norms. The resources are free and available to download at www.etfo.ca/Resources/BodyImageProject/Pages/default.aspx

As teachers, we see first-hand how the media and information technology influence the manner in which our students interact with each other and how they view the world around them. As a national teacher organization, we believe we have a social responsibility but we cannot achieve this in isolation.

CTF believes in teaching the whole child, to instill a love for life-long learning...and to develop their critical thinking and media literacy skills, civic education, creativity and community engagement.

To that end, we've recently launched a program called "Imagineaction" – a venue for teachers to channel creativity, ignite social engagement and instill critical thinking in their students. CTF offers subsidies of \$700 to help teachers launch education projects related to the environment, democracy, health and citizenship education.

For example, why not create a youth video on gender and media from the students' perspectives that can be posted on YouTube? Why not tap on social media to stimulate discussion around gender and media among youth? The possibilities are endless. I invite you to visit our website for more information.

To conclude, I invite you to join the movement for change through education and media literacy at home, in society and at school.

Let's start young with our children to make them intelligent consumers of media.

Mary-Lou Donnelly is the President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation

Imagineaction

"Probably the most inspiring for me was a student in class who won a poster from the book fair and decided on his own to sell tickets during recess and lunch for two weeks. He raised \$99.50 which he also donated to the student whom the fundraiser was for. To me this is what the purpose of this project is about: Taking it upon ourselves to do something good for someone else without a goal of any reward. He was actually embarrassed when I shared his plan with the class!"

[Teacher, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association]

This is a story that plays out in many schools across the country. Imagine if this story was one that could be told about every student and every teacher in Canada. Imagine if every student and teacher worldwide told similar stories. Imagine...

Renowned educator and author Paulo Freire calls for educators to work with their students in creating a problem-solving culture that will inevitably lead to transformation of their world. Teachers know that quality education is not about caching information in students so that it may be withdrawn at a later time (what Freire refers to as the "banking" concept); instead, quality education is about providing students with opportunities to infuse curriculum into real world situations. Education is about being part of a student's journey as a life-long learner and problem solver – it is about teaching students to be critical thinkers and to look for opportunities to apply their knowledge in a transformative way.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) launched a new bilingual program called Imagineaction that assists teachers and their students to move beyond the increasingly standards based, test driven education agenda by providing opportunities to link curricula to community based projects aimed at transformation. This article will provide some of the data that has led to the institution of the Imagineaction movement and will provide details on how CTF and its partners intend to help.

There is recent evidence that speaks to the discussion at hand. The first of these is a report of a workshop conducted by the Landon Pearson Resource

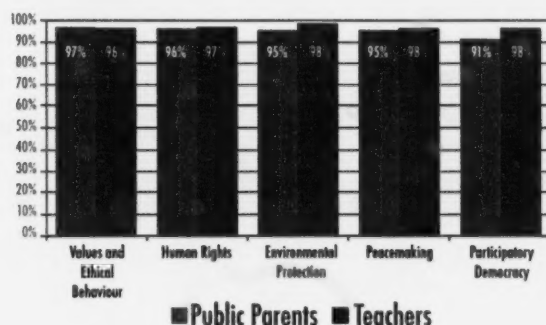
Centre as part of their "Shaking the Movers" initiative. The second is the results of a survey of teachers from six provinces and territories conducted by CTF. The final evidence is from the analysis of a national public opinion poll conducted by Vector Research and commissioned by CTF.

In her report for the Landon Pearson Resource Centre, Ilana Lockwood provides a summary of students' perceptions regarding three articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. When commenting on the right to education and barriers to access, students point out that the school and the community should be engaged as partners in young people's lives. Further, students call for education to provide them with the skills they need to be active participants in society. As one student commented, "the main reason behind education should be to empower children." (Lockwood, 2009, p11) Another student said "an important part of education is to learn to make decisions and to deal with issues properly." (Lockwood, 2009, p12)

In regard to teaching, students had a number of comments. Especially relevant to the discussion at hand are those regarding inclusion and the teaching of civics. On engagement, students commented "you can't be engaged when you are excluded" and "people assume that because you're not on student council, you're not involved. Give students a chance to show that they care in other ways." (Lockwood, 2009, p19-20) These two students are expressing a desire to not only be included in the school community but to be provided with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills in a tangible way.

The evidence provided from the teacher survey was strikingly similar to the evidence provided by the public opinion poll. The message sent by both the teachers and the parents was also very similar to the message sent by the students. Chart 1 shows those parents and teachers who strongly agree or somewhat agree that values and ethical behaviour, human rights, environmental protection, peacemaking and participatory democracy should be taught in the public school system. It is evident that both parents and teachers agree that these topics should be part of the public school curriculum.

Chart 1 – Support for teaching various topics in the public school system



Further results from the surveys include:

- 96% of both parents and teachers either somewhat agree or strongly agree that schools should be involved in community projects;
- 98% of parents either strongly agree or somewhat agree that when community organizations support community-school projects it fosters citizenship and nurtures community-school relationships;
- 96% of parents polled either strongly or somewhat agree that it is possible that student led projects will bring about positive change in a community;
- Over 96% of parents and 100% of teachers believe that it is very important or somewhat important to develop elementary and secondary students' critical thinking skills.

Imagineaction is designed to assist teachers meet the stated desire of parents, teachers and students to use a critical thinking model to teach citizenship through active participation in community based projects. Imagineaction will provide support for students and teachers in English and French schools across the country wishing to incorporate topics related to socially just citizenship. Support for teachers and their students will be provided in four ways: funding subsidies, access to expertise, professional development, and a project showcase.

Funding opportunities will be provided for school-community social action projects tied to the Imagineaction themes:

- CONNECT [relationships]
- ENGAGE [active and participatory democracy]
- THRIVE [health and wellness]
- LEAD [leadership]
- LIVE [environmental sustainability]
- CARE [poverty]

Teachers will be able to register their projects and apply for funding beginning in September 2010. Teachers will also be able to browse current and past

projects in order to connect with colleagues across the country to share their good ideas.

The Imagineaction platform will also contain a database of individuals and organizations willing to share their expertise with teachers and their students. Teachers will be able to browse the list of experts to find someone in their region willing to assist with a local community-based project.

Teachers stated clearly that they required access to professional development opportunities and other resources to assist them in introducing these rather complex topics to their students. Teachers also told us that they would like a resource to assist them in setting up a project in their school. In partnership with the Critical Thinking Consortium, CTF is developing resources that will provide the assistance that teachers requested.

The Imagineaction platform will offer a space that will allow teachers to upload text, pictures, video and other media. This media will be formatted for them on a Web page used to promote the good work that they are doing with their students in their community.

The fundamental principle driving the Imagineaction movement may be summarized in the following quote from Paulo Freire: *Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.* (Paulo Freire, 1968)

It is our hope that Imagineaction will serve as a catalyst to inspire teachers and their students to think critically about the world around them and to act to make their community a better place. Imagine the possibilities!

References

Lockwood, Ilana. (2009). Final Report: Shaking the Movers III. Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights. Ottawa, ON.

Canadian Teachers' Federation (2010). Analysis of CTF teacher survey – Fostering responsible citizenship. Ottawa, ON: Richard Riel & Bernie Froese-Germain.

The Vector Poll (2010). The 2010 national issues in education poll: Conducted February 18 – March 5, 2010 for the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Ottawa, ON.

Calendar

2011 Convention and Province-Wide Vote Deadlines

February 8, 2011

Province-wide vote for the election of President and Vice-President.

February 22, 2011

Run-off ballot for the election of President and Vice-President (if required).

February 27, 2011

- All nominations for Provincial Executive for publication in Convention issue of *The Bulletin* must be postmarked or hand delivered to NLTA Office.
- Names of elected delegates and alternates to Convention should be forwarded to NLTA Office for printing in Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.
- Resolutions to Convention must be received at the NLTA Office.

March 27, 2011

Mailing of Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.

April 27-29, 2011

Biennial General Meeting

April 28, 2011

Final deadline for receipt of nominations for Provincial Executive.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY WINTER 2011 DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR SEMINAR SERIES

January - April 2011

For further details and registration flyers on the 2011 Distinguished Educator Seminar Series, please visit www.mcgill.ca/edu-dise/centres/cel/seminar/

SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF BC CROSSCURRENTS CONFERENCE

March 17-18, 2011

Westin Bayshore Hotel, Vancouver. This is a conference addressing special education concerns of regular classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, special educators and parents. For registration information visit www.bctf.ca/SEA or contact Carol McAndrew at cemcandrew@gmail.com.

NL ENVIRONTHON

May 5-7, 2011

Killdevil Camp, Lomond. Environthon is a fast paced, hands-on competition for high school students that tests your knowledge of Newfoundland and Labrador's natural resources – Aquatic, Ecology, Forestry, Soils and Land Use, Wildlife, and the 2011 theme "Salt and Freshwater Estuaries". Teams are made up of 5 students and a teacher/coach. The winning team has the chance to represent the province at the Canon Environthon in Sackville, New Brunswick, July 24-29, 2011. For more information contact: Krista McCarthy, Model Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador, Tel: 709-637-7300; Fax: 709-634-0255; kmccarthy@mfnl.ca.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AGM

May 18-20, 2011

Terra Nova Park Lodge. "Leading and Learning Together". Featured Speaker: Dr. J. Tim Goddard, Dean, Faculty of Education, UPEI. For more information visit www.cdli.ca/sac2011/sac2011.html.

2011 NATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

September 27 - October 1, 2011

Corner Brook. Corner Brook Regional High will play host to 1,000 student delegates as well as up to 250 teacher delegates for a week-long conference entitled "A New Found Energy". For information on the conference and Call for Presenters visit www.cslc2011.ca.

COSS WORKSHOP: BARBARA COLOROSO LECTURES

October 7, 2011

COSS proudly presents international bestselling author and speaker Barbara Coloroso. She will be presenting two lectures: "Just Because It's Not Wrong Doesn't Make It Right: Teaching Students to Think and Act Ethically" and "The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander." Registration opens April 1, 2011. Workshop information has been posted on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). For more information contact Keith Adey (709) 489-6481 or keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca

Dates to Remember

February 2011

- Feb 1 **Deadline:** Applications for Educational Leave – teachers must make prior application to school board
- Feb 14 Janeway Day in the Schools
- Feb 17 **Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

March 2011

- Mar 6-12 Education Week
- Mar 9-10 NLTA Executive Meeting
- Mar 11-12 Joint Council Meeting
- Mar 17 **Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
- Mar 31 **Board Deadline:** Notice for retirement at end of school year

- Mar 31 **Deadline:** Centennial Study Award Applications
- Mar 31 **Deadline (on or before March 31):** International Conference Presenters Program Applications

April 2011

- Apr 1 **Deadline:** Johnson Bursary Applications
- Apr 15 **Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
- Apr 21 **Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
- Apr 30 **Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
- Apr 30 **Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract